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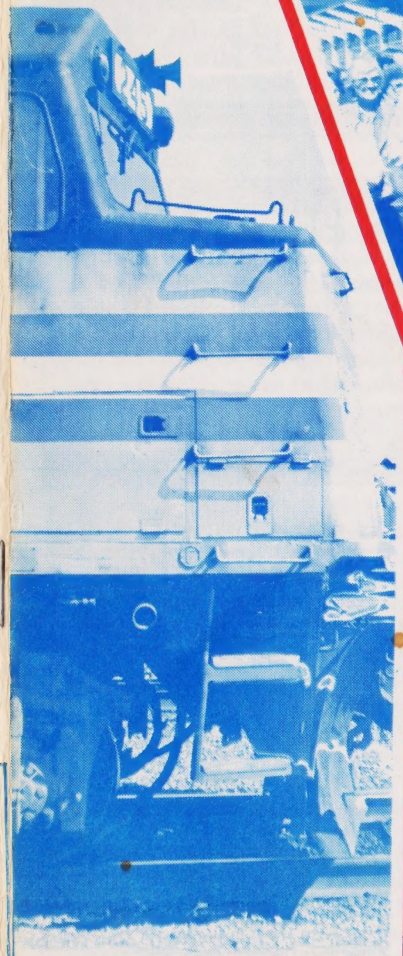

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ON THE COVER

Scenes from the inaugural press run for the re-routing of the COAST STARLIGHT via Sacramento, Marysville and Chico CA, which was effective Apr 25. The press train ran on Apr 23, using the equipment of the northbound SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA that arrived in Sacramento that morning. In the upper right photo, Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco addresses the crowd at Sacramento, and at lower right the band plays as the train prepares to depart. Full coverage appears in this issue. RTN photos.

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ALAN BOYD QUITS AMTRAK

Amtrak President Alan Boyd made a surprise announcement to his staff on May 3 that he will be leaving Amtrak July 1. The announcement was made publicly on May 5. Boyd has been with Amtrak as President and Chief Executive Officer since June 1, 1978, and became Chairman of the Board on Oct 1, 1981. Boyd said that during his term as President--a longer term than either of his predecessors--he has achieved three of four objectives he had set for Amtrak: modernization of Amtrak's facilities and equipment, stabilizing relations with Congress and the Administration, and modernizing labor relations. The one objective he did not achieve was finding a permanent, non-government source of revenue for Amtrak so it could be free of legislative strings. As regards labor relations, Amtrak and the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, of whom 7500 work for Amtrak, have reached a tentative agreement (on Apr 22) which is now being voted upon by mail vote of the members, a process which is to be completed by May 20. If this agreement is ratified, Amtrak will have achieved a desirable labor objective, the terms of which will be announced after ratification.

Boyd is going to work with a French multi-national corporation, taking over as head of North American operations. The name of the firm will not be announced until May 10, but it is believed not to be connected with promotion of TGV trains thruout the world. The firm reportedly had been trying to recruit Boyd since late in 1981, but Boyd has delayed until Amtrak was thru the first stages of its labor negotiations before agreeing to change jobs. There is no indication that there was pressure on Boyd from the Administration or elsewhere to leave. In fact, DOT Secretary Drew Lewis and Boyd have formed a good relationship, and Lewis was reported to be honestly upset and surprised at Lewis's announcement. A search committee for a new President has been formed by the Amtrak Board, and no names have been publicly suggested yet. In recruiting, Amtrak is hampered by the legislatively established limit of $85,000 on its President's salary. NARP said that it did not believe that the DOT would take advantage of the situation to harm Amtrak, given Amtrak's strong support in Congress.

BOOKS

Wilson Brothers Publications has just released its tenth volume in the series "Trolley Trails Through the West." This series was begun in the mid-1930s and published originally in small-print mini-booklets. The originals sold out completely but have now been re-issued in larger, 8½x11 size with photographs. The originals, out of print, are now collectors' items, but the present series is readily available, fortunately for us, and the prices of the various volumes are quite reasonable--only $4 to $8 each--by present-day standards, an economy made possible by means such as hand-typing the text rather than using expensive typesetting apparatus. The results are charming, entertaining and informative, and should not be missed by any transit enthusiast.

Volume 10 is a 32-page booklet of miscellany and "summing up"--in part a sort of companion volume to the earlier numbers in this series. One of the main features, for example, is "Trolley Days in Council Bluffs" by Robert S. Wilson. The author's late mother was born in Council Bluffs, and from her recollections and from additional data the author compiled an account of trolley days in a fairly typical small city from the 1880s to the 1940s. It is accompanied by early-day photographs and a hand-drawn map.

This volume is only $6, and it carries a money-back guarantee, as do all of the Wilson Brothers publications. A list of the entire series is available from the publisher: Wilson Bros. Publications, Box 712, Yakima WA 98907.

RAIL CANADA

JASPER'S TOURIST BUSINESS is being badly hurt by the loss of the SUPER CONTINENTAL. From Jan-Mar, about 20% of the normal winter business was lost, according to local reports. But the biggest drop is expected to come in the summer, because a larger percentage of summer tourists traditionally arrive by train.

THE BUS CONNECTION between Seattle and the CANADIAN at Vancouver can still be made, said Amtrak, altho it's tight. The connection is not guaranteed.

EDMONTON'S RAIL TRAFFIC has dropped off at least 30% this winter, after discontinuation of the SUPER CONTINENTAL, according to Edmonton newspaper reports. Many criticisms of the "substitute" service have been noted.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAIL has ordered 20 locomotives for Eastern Canadian use with a new design , a cutaway (tapered) section behind the cab that allows better visibility in heavy snow. The intake system is also redesigned to reduce snow intake to traction motors. Designed by Bill Draper of CN's Operation Department, the modification has been nicknamed the "Draper Taper".

VIA ROUTE CUTS last year amounted to almost 20% of the system, but the reduction in deficits this year is expected to amount to only $14 million. Transcontinental operations in the West are expected to cost $91 million this fiscal year (which began Apr 1) compared to $119 last year--a very modest savings for cutting the long distance service in half. VIA's total spending this year is estimated to be $362 million. The $14 million will be added to VIA's capital budget, bringing it from $125 million to $139 million. The government "saved" $15 million by chopping Eastern transcon service, cutting the cost from $47 to $32 million. Cost increases on lines such as Montreal-Toronto, Toronto-Windsor and Winnipeg-Churchill offset some of the "savings" due to the cuts.

THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT plans to introduce two new GO-Train commuter runs in the fall as replacements for runs that VIA will discontinue on Sep 7. However, the 100-mile Havelock-Toronto VIA run won't be replaced; Ontario said it did not qualify as a commuter run. GO will require more locomotives to operate the two new runs.

THE CALGARY CONNECTION: VIA Rail operates a bus service between Edmonton and Calgary to allow direct connections from Edmonton and Red Deer with the CANADIAN. Dec 21-Apr 24 times had the bus leaving Edmonton at 6:30am, with 10am arrival in Calgary, and 9pm departure from Calgary with a 12:30am Edmonton arrival. Many complaints have been made of the poor hours of service required to use this bus.

MAYOR OF MONTREAL, Jean Drapeau, in an early-April meeting with the French minister of foreign trade, revealed that he would like to see TGV trains linking Montreal and New York. Such a high-speed train would permit a 2hr, 58min trip. The use of Mirabel Airport would be increased by such a service, Drapeau believes. Transport Minister Jean Luc Pepin, however, said that the TGV would be too costly.

WORLD OF WHALES: VIA Rail offers tour packages from Jul 30 until Oct 8, in cooperation with the Societe Lineenne du Quebec to the world of whales in the St. Lawrecne estuary. The package, from $169 to $219, includes rail roundtrip to Riviere-du-Loup and a 9-hr cruise with wildlife experts, and two nights' accommodations at the Auberge de la Pointe.

NEW LRC ORDER was placed by VIA Rail on Apr 8. Ten trainsets were ordered from Bombardier at a cost of $100 million. The order involves 10 locomotives and 50 coaches. Option clauses in the contract provide for 10 more trainsets in both 1983 and 1984.

CANADIAN NATIONAL MADE a profit of $193.2 million in 1981, up slightly from 1980. CN President Robert Bandeen has announced his resignation.

TWENTY OR MORE CN and VIA passenger cars are in storage at Pointe St. Charles Yard in Montreal. Most are "Canadian Flyer"-type coaches, but some are streamlined Pullman-Standard and other picture-window cars.

FRANCE'S EXPERIENCE WITH HIGH-SPEED TRAINS

The following is the complete text of testimony presented on April 5 to the Transportation, Aviation and Materials Subcommittee of the House Science and Technology Committee by Dagobert M. Scher, Assistant General Manager for North America of French National Railroads. The Subcommittee was holding hearings on Advanced Rail Technology and the Future of American Transportation.

French National Railroads' high-speed program goes back to 1955 when two French-built electric locomotives ran at 206mph, a world-record speed, to find out what were the optimum capabilities of conventional rail transportation. Based upon the results, work to upgrade speed was carried out upon the two basic components of the railroad:

(a) on the roadbed: by improving track characteristics and maintenance procedures, by installing automatic signalling and by electrifying high-density lines; (b) on the equipment: by developing rolling stock and locomotives capable of running smoothly, safely and reliably at high speeds, first at 100mph and later on at 125mph.

All these improvements were achieved by railroad staff, within the railroad operating budget as part of the research and development program of French National Railroads.

As early as 1967, and for the first time in Europe, daily passenger train service at 125 mph was introduced between Paris and Toulouse, a 446-mile trip which was thus shortened by 40 minutes. Since public acceptance was immediate, shortly thereafter a similar 125mph service was inaugurated to Bordeaux, a 363-mile trip covered in four hours with two intermediate stops.

This program was later extended to non-electrified lines by using Turbotrains; Paris-Cherbourg, a 150-mile trip, was shortened by 1/2 hour, and Lyon-Bordeaux, a 400-mile trip, was shortened by 1 1/2 hours.

What was learned from this experience with high speeds? (a) That the cost of running a train at 125mph instead of 100mph only increases by 10%; (b) that high speed contributes to an increase in traffic.

To determine the effect of frequency upon traffic, a test was conducted between Paris and Caen on the Paris to Cherbourg line by increasing the number of daily trains to 10. The result was very positive: traffic went up from 2.1 million passengers annually in 1970 to 3.9 million in 1978, an average annual increase of 8%.

Construction of a new dedicated passenger high-speed line was contemplated back in 1967 when French National Railroads was considering ways of alleviating the problem of saturation which existed on the main trunk line, Paris to Lyon.

Several alternatives had been studied: (a) increasing the number of existing tracks; (b) rerouting freight traffic in order to leave the main line to passengers exclusively; (c) constructing a new high-speed passenger line.

We opted for the last-named solution. The proposal was submitted to an independent task force appointed by the government, and which included airline and highway representatives. It came out in favor of this project in 1969, with plans to run turbine-powered high-speed trains. But nothing much occurred until the first energy crisis caught the world by surprise in 1973. The government then reappointed a new committee to review the proposed new high-speed line, this time based upon electrically-powered trains. This committee drew similar conclusions to the first one. So, in March of 1974 the French Cabinet approved the project and declared the construction of a new high-speed rail line between Paris and Lyon of public necessity. Actual construction started in December, 1976.

The main purpose of this line is to improve rail service thru Southeastern France by relieving the present line which was handling 250 trains a day and by speeding up feeder connections. It has an impact on an area where 40% of the total French population lives.

The dedication of the new line to passenger service exclusively allows the use of steep gradients (up to 3.5%). It also results in shortening of the route: 265 miles from Paris to Lyon instead of 320 miles for the old line. It eliminates the need for tunnels, reduces the number of required bridges, and thus brings down the cost of the infrastructure by 30%.

Since the line is of standard gauge, TGV trains may also run on existing lines beyond Lyon, and penetration into the metropolitan areas of Paris and Lyon on existing tracks is possible, thereby avoiding excessive construction costs around urban areas. Unlike the Japanese Tokaido line, which is separate from the conventional network, the French high-speed line is directly connected to the existing one. TGV trains will not only link Paris to Lyon, but travel to Marseille, Grenoble, and even as far as Switzerland.

The new line is especially designed to high-speed standards, for speeds of 200mph with .43 degree curves. It is electrified with overhead catenaries using industrial current of 25 kV, single phase, 50 cps. For

obvious safety reasons, there are no level crossings, and the line is fenced all the way. In addition, signalling is provided directly in the engineer's cab with an automatic speed monitoring system while the train locations are monitored from a central control station located in Paris.

Regional contracting firms took part in the infrastructural work as contractors, subcontractors and suppliers. An estimated 20 to 25% of the work was carried out by local contractors. Thus, the development of this project had significent repercussions on the economic activity of the areas involved.

Great care was taken to safeguard the environment. Environmental impact studies were prepared, and several routes were considered with the cooperation of the Ministries of Agriculture, Culture and Environment, while senstiive areas were the subject of special architectural and landscaping studies.

French National Railroads ordered 87 train sets in 1976, of which about 50 have already been delivered and perform daily high-speed service. Each train set is composed of eight passenger cars plus two power units, one at each end, capable of developing 8560hp under 25kV.

Each train offers 386 seats in coach-type seating arrangement: 111 seats in first class and 275 in second class. Two train sets may be coupled together and run with one locomotive crew (one man in the cab) for a total seating capacity of 772.

Altho on Feb 26, 1981 French National Railroads ran its TGV on the new line at the world-record speed of 236mph, maximum speed in commercial operation is limited to 165mph, which is the economic optimum between energy consumption and time saved.

Despite such high speeds, TGV trains exert only limited stresses on the track, as the load borne by each axle does not exceed 17 tons. Thus, it remains well below the value encountered on conventional equipment: 20 tons in Europe and 30 tons in the U.S.A.

The total cost of the new line, including land acquisitions, roadbed, track laying work, signalling, electrification and the purchase of 87 train sets, amounted to about $1.5 billion (at the exchange rate of 6 FF to the dollar), of which $420 million was spent for the laying of 250 miles of double track and 25 miles of single track made up of welded rails fixed on reinforced concrete sleepers. It also included 100 track switches, the entire electrification, communications, signalling, the fencing in of the line and all building construction. The cost of 87 trains amounted to $475 million, and the balance went for land acquisition and the infrastructure (general earth work and bridges).

The financing for this project was entirely covered by French National Railroads without any government funds. It was part of the railroad's normal investment program, that is to say with self-financing out of the depreciation allowance and loans floated in France as well as in other countries. The only government involvement was to guarantee the loans floated by the railroads and yet with a yearly limit. Contrary to what was sometimes erroneously reported by the media, in no way did the government or the taxpayer subsidize the construction of the new French high-speed line.

It is also important to note that:

--French National Railroads investments for its high-speed line were never made at the expense of the existing network. In fact, they represented only a portion of total railroad investments and never more than 20% for a given year.

--Cost overruns remained within 5% of estimates.

--The new high-speed line was cheaper to construct than a highway of equivalent capacity ($4 million a mile). The maximum capacity of the new line is 20,000 passengers per hour.

--The financial rate of return for French National Railroads is 17% while the economic rate of return for the nation is 33%.

TGV trains are highly energy-efficient. Per passenger, their energy consumption is slightly less than that of a conventional train running at 100mph. With a 65% occupancy ratio, the TGV consumes per passenger about one-fifth the energy of an Airbus plane and less than one-fourth that of a subcompact car. In fact, per passenger, the energy consumption of a TGV train is about that of a motorbike--107 miles per gallon.

This can be expressed in another way: 10 second-class passengers cover the energy cost of a whole TGV train run between Paris and Lyon.

TGV trains run on electricity. Thus, they make extensive use of French domestic energy resources in the form of hydraulic and nuclear energy instead of imported oil. In addition, this form of energy is non-polluting.

The noise level of TGV trains at 165mph is lower than that of conventional trains.

On Sep 27, 1981 the southern two-thirds section of the new line, or 177 miles, opened to commercial operation with a total of 18 daily TGV trains each way (13 to Lyon, two to Geneva, and three to Dijon). On Fridays, French National Railroads offers 23 trains each way. The Paris to Lyon stretch, which

The new high-speed line was cheaper to construct than a highway of equivalent capacity.

(continued on page 19)

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

FEDERAL MASS TRANSIT budget for Fiscal 1983 is being worked out now. The House Public Works Committee has introduced a bill to provide $3.7 billion for mass transit, rising to $4.35 billion by Fiscal 1986. NARP reports there are two bills in the Senate: a good bill (S. 2377) which includes $3.2 billion and the use of block grants to states that allows them to choose use of operating funds or capital investments; and a bad bill (S. 2367, the Administration's bill) which has only about $3 billion for 1983, eliminates all operating assistance by 1985, and specifically prohibits funding new rail systems. NARP urges rail supporters to contact their legislators and communicate support for the highest possible funding for mass transit--at least the $3.7 billion which is the current level and which is included in the House draft mentioned above. The ideal bill should not rule out starting new rail systems.

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION on Apr 23 recommended a transit plan that would include an expanded bus-on-freeway system and a light rail line on Milwaukee's Wisconsin Avenue to 44th Street and thence to the Northridge Shopping Center, plus other light rail lines. The full committee is to make a formal adoption of the plan on June 17, and then actual studies can begin.

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT on May 3 formally asked the state Public Utilities Commission to order Southern Pacific to immediately extend Peninsula commute train service beyond its present terminus at 4th and Townsend in San Francisco to the Ferry Building at the foot of Market Street in the downtown financial district. Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco publicly announced the move at a press conference in San Francisco, accompanied by various legislators. She said that Caltrans wants to extend three morning trains--#27, 33 and 41--and three evening trains--#44, 50 and 56--the additional 1½ miles to the Ferry Building. Necessary track work to make the change would cost less than $1 million, Gianturco said, and would be borne by Caltrans. The SP countered with the claim that the plan was not well-thought out, and that most of the track to be added belonged to the City and Port of San Francisco, not to SP.

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of Transportation said on May 4 that it is preparing an application to UMTA for a $300,000 grant to start planning of a commuter rail system between Hialeah and West Palm Beach. UMTA is reportedly amenable to approving the grant. Florida has also been offered 48 rail cars used for commuters at the 1967 World's Fair in Montreal at $125,000 each. Rebuilding the cars would cost an additional $4 million. Florida DOT officials do not favor the purchase, tho local Florida officials do.

PORTLAND, OREGON OFFICIALS said on Apr 27 that they will investigate the possibility of initiating a light rail system between Portland and Milwaukie OR. The former Portland Traction right of way to Oregon City, except for a portion thru the Eastmoreland Golf Course, still exists, as does a bridge over the Clackamas River.

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA'S proposed Guadalupe Corridor light rail line will get federal funding of $2 million for an engineering study, it was announced Apr 30. The federal okay means that federal funds will also be available for the construction phase of the proposed $187 million project.

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of Transportation on Apr 23 asked the state Public Utilities Commission to force Southern Pacific to start Los Angeles-Oxnard rail commuter service by Nov 1.

NEW YORK CITY Mayor Koch announced May 4 new procedures by which subway conductors and fare clerks must keep passengers informed about delays of more than two minutes' duration.

REVIVING THE STATE OF MAINE EXPRESS
by Kevin Gregoire and Bob Underwood

The last run of the STATE OF MAINE EXPRESS by the Boston and Maine Railroad took place Saturday evening, Oct 27, 1960. On Saturday morning, Apr 3, 1982 the Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts, under the able leadership of its president Bill Crawford, revived this fine train for one round trip--Boston to Portland, Maine via Worcester.

My young friend Chris Cyphers, who wasn't even born at the time the original STATE OF MAINE EXPRESS was discontinued, and I held tickets for the 8:25am departure from Boston's North Station. North Station like South Station is merely a shadow of its former self, but the new STATE OF MAINE EXPRESS looked very impressive. Twelve new 1978-vintage Pullman Standard brushed stainless steel 99-seat coaches were sandwiched between two F40-PH-2 locomotives. The all-MBTA consist reflected the early morning sun from its silver sides with the deep lavender window band and gold striping looking impressive.

We boarded, found a double seat, stored our stuff in the overhead luggage rack and looked over the equipment, which was basically two six-car push-pull commuter trains joined at the control cabs. The windows were Amfleet-sized, the lighting was fluorescent recessed in translucent panels, the seats were blue vinyl flipover, and the flooring a skid-proof dark rubber type.

Promptly at 8:25 we pulled (or pushed?) away from North Station over the drawbridge spanning the Charles River past Tower A of the Boston & Maine, then swung west past Bunker Hill and then Boston Engine Terminal where all North Side commuter equipment is maintained.

Our first stop was Cambridge, where a few passengers joined our 800 already on board. Cambridge Porter Square will be the site of a new intermodal commuter rail/rapid transit station with the extension of the MBTA red line from Harvard Square to Alewife Brook Parkway. Construction is in progress all around us, and the line is set to open in about two years. We followed the construction for a couple of miles to Route 2, the Alewife Brook Parkway terminal, where the red line will end.

About 12 miles from Boston we rumbled over route 128, the major beltway around Boston, and passed into the affluent suburb of Westen, where it is rumored no one is allowed into town with an automobile license plate containing more than four numbers!

Approaching Concord, we were treated to a view of Walden Pond, made famous by Henry David Thoreau. At Concord we boarded a few more passengers. Then it was time to explore our train, our seats secure from new passengers. First we ran into NARP Vice President Sam Stokes of New Hampshire and former NARP Director Bill Ensign of Westfield, then NARP Directors Anthony Perl of New Jersey and former NARP Director Andrea Banks of Pennsylvania. Finally, we met Conrail Conductor George Casey and a group of Amtrak employees seeing "what the competition is up to!"

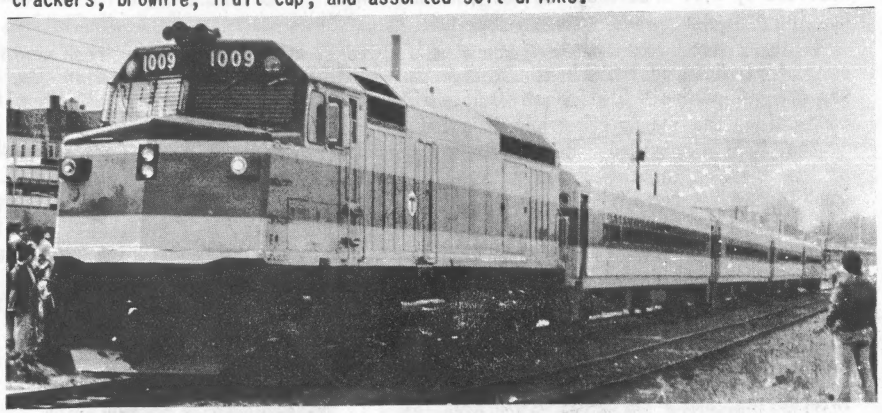
Time passed quickly with all these old friends, and before I realized it we had stopped at Ayer, about 36 miles out. Just north of us we saw an eastbound commuter run stop at the station, pick up passengers and depart for Boston, its F40-PH-2 pushing the equipment on the west end. Then we started southward down the Worcester branch. At this point we were actually on the STATE OF MAINE route.

A stop for a photo runby was planned at the Wachusett Reservoir near Clinton. The sun had disappeared into the haze, but it was still relatively bright as we stopped to unload most of our 800 passengers for the event. Our train backed north, disappearing behind a grove of pine trees, stopped, whistled, reversed direction, and headed south, passing us at about 50mph for a spectacular runby

with the water as background. Video and audio recorders, movie cameras and still photographers recorded the event. The train backed up and we reboarded, heading toward Worcester where we stopped north of the decrepit old Union Station, abandoned by Amtrak for a new, small brick structure to the east.

Quickly we made a reversal and headed north towards Maine, retracing our tracks as far as Ayer. Just east of that point we passed a rather spectacular coal train derailment (altho a lot of it had been cleaned up. We were held to about 5mph in the vicinity of it. (A dispatcher told a passenger that another freight was originally scheduled to wait for the coal train to pass, but then the dispatcher decided to let him go ahead. It's a good thing he did; the engines of the other train would have been sitting right next to the derailment spot, and there is no doubt that injuries would have resulted.)

After creeping by the shoefly we finally got back on the main. Rain began to splat on the window. At 1:04 we passed an empty coal train with Conrail engines and caboose. Great dispatching--we had a running meet. We crossed the northeastern tier of Massachusetts thru Lowell and Lawrence, where we stopped to pick up box lunches and cans of soft drinks (soda in Western Massachusetts, tonic in Eastern). By this time passengers were famished, and enjoyed the freshly prepared treat of one roast beef and one ham sandwich, potato chips, crackers, brownie, fruit cup, and assorted soft drinks.



MBTA equipment of the kind used on the STATE OF MAINE EXPRESS run.
Photo by Peter Roehm.

We rumbled over the Merrimack River at Haverhill, then entered the state of New Hampshire. A decision was made to restock at East Kingston, a photo runby location. Since only control cars have rest rooms and drinking water, there was virtually no water left, and a supply of soft drinks was needed. (This and the lack of an operable public address system appeared to be our only two problems, and they were well-handled by a patient MBTA crew and understanding passengers.) East Kingston has a beautifully restored station. The train ran north, then south by the station, and then north into the station again. There was a little general store nearby that was descended upon by many.

We then entered the state of Maine, crossing the Salmon Falls River. About 150 passengers would be leaving at Kennebunk to take buses to the Seashore Trolley Museum, while another 150-200 locals would be getting on there to take a roundtrip ride to Portland. We departed Kennebunk at 4:11, about 1:20 late. We were experiencing brief rain showers at this point. Chris and I decided to stay on to Portland, and moved up to take a position in the engineer's seat of the now-vacant north-facing control car located mid-train. The large glass area and the facing control car make for good viewing and monitoring of various gauges (speedometer, brake pressure, etc.) The area quickly became an informal arena for the discussion

of the future of rail passenger service in this country, as various advocates stopped by to chat.

Our train whisked quickly into the pine forests. About 15 miles further north we entered Old Orchard Beach and finally got a view of the ocean. By now the sky was gray with light rain, the sea a dark blue and very rough, with brilliant white caps rolling in and crashing onto shore near the amusement park not yet open for the season. For a few miles we could catch glimpses of the ocean.

Passengers could detrain at Old Orchard Beach for about an hour's layover. Continuing on to Portland, the trek was very slow. At 5:26 we stopped at the old Portland Union Station site. We were not allowed to detrain, since there is no station facility. Our ride thru Rigby Yards was interesting, as engines appeared to have been spotted there for us. In the yards was the last Maine Central unit still in the old maroon paint scheme, and cameras clicked as we ran slowly past.

The crew changed ends of the train, we flipped our seats, and headed south to Boston, into the gathering darkness and now-heavy rain. For supper, we dug into roast beef sandwiches that Chris's mother prepared for us. We quickly realized we were never going to make our 7:45pm bus, and would have to opt for the midnight run. Indeed, some of our passengers would even have trouble making the connection to Amtrak's NIGHT OWL from South Station at 10:15pm. The situation is quickly resolved by Bill Crawford, who has B&M radio ahead to ask Amtrak to hold for connecting passengers, and arranges for cabs to get the passengers to South Station.

We ran nonstop to Lawrence, where we stopped at 8:59 to take on a fresh engineer. Arrival in Boston's North Station came at 10:03, 2:23 late. The NIGHT OWL was due out of South Station at 10:15. Thirteen passengers managed to make the connection, and the Amtrak train departed at 10:27.

Sam, Bill, Chris and I decided to try the MBTA subway next, boarding a new LRV at the lower North Station platform. For 75¢ we each purchased a token that I used to pay 20¢ for while I was in college here, and boarded the space-age vehicle for the short ride to Park Street. For all their problems, I like the LRVs, a nearly exact replica of those purchased by the San Francisco Muni, which I rode last October. At Park Street, Chris and I went downstairs and boarded a Silver Bird rapid transit train to South Station (the train continues on to Braintree), but we got off at the Trailways station for an uneventful midnight bus ride to Pittsfield, where we arrived at 3:30am and walked back home.

Needless to say, a 24-hour day with a 14-hour train ride is exhausting but interesting, and I certainly would never pass it up, as there is no guarantee that a train ride from Boston to Portland will become a routine thing in the very near future. If Amtrak were ever to operate such a train, it would probably have to be a section of the MONTREALER to and from Springfield following the route from Worcester we took today. In the meantime, look for Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts to operate more special trains on freight-only routes. Perhaps in the future we'll see a Boston-North Adams-Pittsfield-Canaan CT roundtrip now that B&M has taken over these two ex-Conrail branch lines.

★ RIDING FOR FUN IN PHILADELPHIA ★

by Walter Zullig, Jr.

I had earmarked this afternoon in late March for some railfanning. Other afternoons had been so designated without success, but today I finished up my business about 1:45 and headed for Philadelphia's Suburban Station with the objective of covering the Media-West Chester line as well as the Ivy Ridge line, both ex-PRR. For unknown reasons, I've not ridden the West Chester line beyond Media since 1959, and I had never ridden the Ivy Ridge extension and the old Manayunk line. My last trip to Manayunk was in 1963--out on PRR and back on the Reading which passes under the PRR just before the Manayunk station.

Highlights of the ride were (1) the large "flying junction" around 52nd Street

where the Manayunk Branch leaves the main line, and (2) the high concrete arch bridge over the Schuylkill River and Reading RR just before Manayunk. The double track ends at "CP Jeff", about ½-mile beyond the junction off the main line. In this area brush brows quite close to the tracks, and we hit against some medium-sized trees! A large high-rise apartment house at the Wynnefield Avenue station apprars to be a good source of passengers.

After Wynnefield Avenue, the line runs thru some nice city residential areas with quite large homes. At Manayunk the train headed north thru industrial-type areas with grade crossings for the short ride to the new high-level platform station at Ivy Ridge. Our 2-car Silverliner train consisted of cars 326 and 377 and had very clean windows. About 25 passengers were carried outbound and about 20 inbound.

I found train 0727 to West Chester loading on track 10 at Suburban Station, right behind a 3-car Amtrak Metroliner equipment train to Harrisburg. I always have trouble getting used to this practice of loading two trains with departure times 5-10 minutes apart from the same track. This often is done at this station, but I'm used to Grand Central where each train has its own track. Our train consisted of Silverliners 211 and 266. I rode in the rear car, which had clean gray Lexan windows. The head car had green Lexan windows--the type which leave you with the feeling that you're riding thru the night.

We departed on time at 3:25pm for our 27.5-mile journey to West Chester. The first 14 miles, to Media, is a high-density (by Philadelphia standards) commuter line with frequent service and close-together stations. After 22 minutes I noted milepost 10 at the Morton station. Swarthmore Station is the "Larchmont" of this line, with the largest crowd detraining there. The second largest group got off at Media, along with the crew which changes at that point. Tickets were inspected /collected by the new crew after leaving Elwyn, the park/ride station about a mile west of Media. Of the 160-some passengers after 30th Street Station, only about 20 stayed on beyond Elwyn. The crew took a poll and advised the engineer which stops he could skip. The characteristics of the line change to a country interurban after Elwyn and it is hard to believe that the entire operation is within 27.5 miles of downtown Philadelphia, generally known as "Center City."

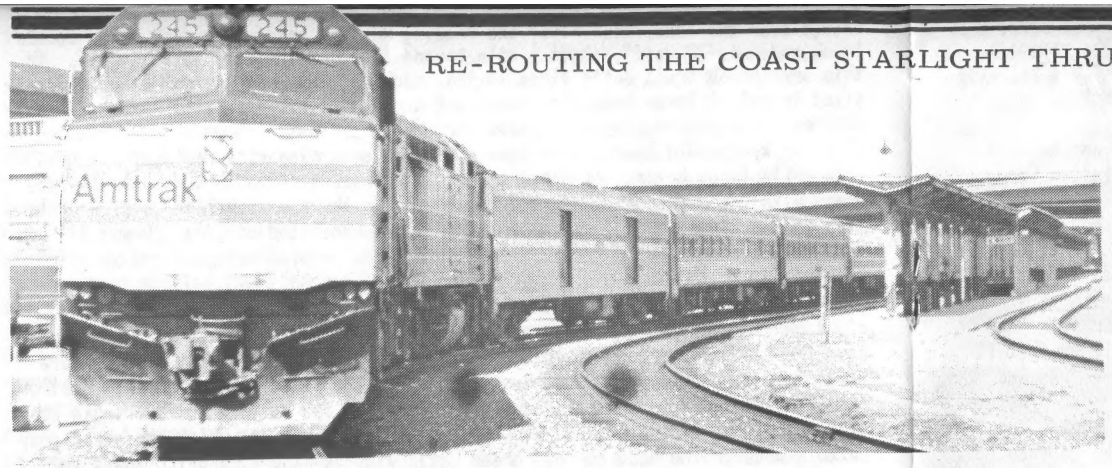
In keeping with the rural flavor, the train stopped to discharge passengers at Williamson School and Wawa, neither of which is listed in the timetable as a stop for this train. The crew advised that they can stop on signal at any of the stations. Williamson School was clearly the best station building; obviously it's maintained by the school. Wawa is being restored, having been sold or leased to a private owner. I think I recall a large West Chester station back in 1959--only a small telephone office remains there now. Our largest single discharge point was West Chester State College, a shelter outside West Chester, where six alighted. Arrival at West Chester was at 4:43 (due at 4:33) due to some slow orders enroute.

After a few quick photos I reboarded the train which became #0746 to Media, where a change of trains would be necessary for those headed to Center City. I rode only as far as Media, as I had planned to take the former Red Arrow Media line from there to Upper Darby, thence the Market-Frankford subway-elevated back to 30th Street Station.

We departed West Chester at 4:46 (scheduled 4:43) and arrived Media about five minutes late at 5:20. After photographing both trains in the station, I walked several blocks where I was rewarded shortly by the sight of ex-Red Arrow (now SEPTA) Brill car #78 lumbering along the single track toward the terminal. The poles were changed and we departed at 5:40 for a most enjoyable ½-hour ride to 69th Street Terminal, Upper Darby. The windows were spotless and the car made a beautiful old-fashioned traction sound, brake noise, etc. Three of the new Kawasaki cars (#108, 111 and 112) were passed enroute.

The "connecting" subway delivered me to 30th Street by 6:28pm, in more than ample time to catch Amtrak's Metroliner Service Train 286 scheduled to depart at 6:44 for its non-stop run to New York. In fact it arrived four minutes early and had to wait for time before leaving.

RE-ROUTING THE COAST STARLIGHT THRU CALIFORNIA'S CAPITAL



Changing the route of Amtrak's COAST STARLIGHT so it would run thru Sacramento, Marysville and Chico, at the doorstep of an even larger population, was talked about for a long time; but the move was finally made on April 25, when with the spring timetable change Amtrak sent the train along the east side of the Sacramento Valley instead of the west side.

On Friday, April 23, a special inaugural press train ran, during daylight hours, along the new route--Sacramento-Chico (actually as far as Tehama, where the new route joins the old) and return. The train, shown in photos here and on our cover, was actually the equipment of the northbound SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, augmented by three bi-level cars (one Hi-level car and two Superliners) to hold the crowd of rail supporters celebrating this service improvement. The three extra cars were sent north from Los Angeles for this occasion, and supporters were invited to ride from Bay Area points to the Sacramento Valley to join in the festivities.

The press train arrived in Sacramento at 9:14am, 16mins early (a normal occurrence for the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA) for the welcoming program scheduled for 9:45.

Officials speaking at the program included Clark Tyler and Art Lloyd of Amtrak, Adriana Gianturco of Caltrans, Congressman Robert Matsui and Eugene Chappie, and local mayors and other officials. Said Gianturco, "Today's inaugural train marks the end of a four-year struggle" (Caltrans had first proposed the re-routing in 1978, and a fight with SP, which finally went to the national arbitration panel, was settled only last December.) Gianturco noted that it has been 25 years since Marysville and Chico have had rail passenger service. Two other important aspects of this re-routing, she said, are that it will add over one million people to the STARLIGHT's territory, so that at least 175,000 new riders will be attracted to the train each year; and Sacramento is returned to "its historical position as the rail hub of northern California." The capital city will now be served by six trains daily.

The press train left Sacramento promptly at 10am to move on for stops and similar programs at Marysville and Chico. Arrival at Marysville was scheduled for 11:15am and Chico at 12:15. The train would then move on to Tehama, where it would turn and run back to Sacramento, arriving there at 4pm. Refreshments and a light luncheon were served to guests, and on the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA out of Oakland a continental breakfast of coffee, orange juice and Danish pastry was brought to each guest at his coach seat.

The consist of the press train was as follows: F40 engines 245 and 287; baggage 1129, Heritage sleepers 2995 "Pine Brook" and 2988 "Pine Dale", Amfleet cars 21851, 21887, 21825 and 20225, Hi-level transition dorm-coach 39916, and Superliners 31033 and 34010. (This, of course, was also the consist of train 18 of April 22.)

The first COAST STARLIGHT train to use the new route (not counting the earlier trial runs reported previously in RTN) was southbound train 11 that left Seattle on April 24. The first #14 to regularly use the route left Los Angeles on April 25. Reader Craig Thompson reports that that train had the following consist: engines 248 and 244; baggage 1234, Hi-level transition car 39915, Superliners coach baggage 31034, coach 34037, coach 34080, Hi-level 39944, Superliners lounge 33016, diner 38031, and sleepers 32022 and 32012. The train left Oakland 13 minutes late and was further delayed by a switch engine stalled on the eastbound main. Arrival at Richmond was 31mins late. The train left Sacramento at 10:14pm, 24 minutes late. A number of railfans rode the train to Sacramento for the occasion, and at Sacramento several more boarded for the first regular-service ride to Chico.

An Amtrak ad was seen in San Francisco-area newspapers on May 5. It pictured a Superliner train in mountain scenery and was captioned "Now you've got another direct line to the state capital." Following up on that play on words, the ad noted that "For those of you whose ambition it is to make it to the Capital, Amtrak offers you another golden opportunity. Now the Coast Starlight goes to Sacramento and beyond." And the text ended with: "And make the Coast Starlight your capital gain."

Photos: (Above:) The press train prepares to leave Sacramento. (Left:) Amtrak's Clark Tyler and Art Lloyd confer before the start of the Sacramento ceremony. (Right:) View of the press train leaving Sacramento shows the three bi-level cars at the rear of the mostly-Amfleet consist. RTN photos.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE SOO LINE must continue its mixed train service between Neenah and Argonne Wisconsin (and on to Sault Ste. Marie), ruled the Wisconsin Transportation Commission on Apr 21. The commission was impressed by the fact that over 100 individual briefs were filed in opposition to the railroad's proposed discontinuance. The commission denied the railroad's contentions that the service was dangerous to passengers, that it is a financial burden to the railroad, and that it disrupts freight service. The little-used service is operated in a caboose on a freight train. A ticket for the full run costs $13.04. Wisconsin ARP said that five days after the decision the railroad changed the train's schedule so that it (train 912) now leaves Neenah around midnight, instead of 7:30am. This was an apparent move to make the train less desirable to prospective passengers. The commission said that the Soo Line must list the train in the Official Guide and elsewhere and ought to reinstall some seats that were removed from the caboose.....

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES for January are given on page 23 of this issue. The February figures arrived just as we were going to press, too late for inclusion in this issue. They show a .9% decrease overall for that month, with NE Corridor increasing 2.1%, short distance off 3.3%, and long distance down 7.8%. The full data will be published next issue.....

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THE OIL GLUT is coming to an end, according to industry experts. The Wall Street Journal reported (May 7) that retail gasoline prices were expected to rise 3-4 cents per gallon within a few weeks. This is due to the fast depletion of oil inventories worldwide and the cut in production by Saudi Arabia. Look for heavier use of passenger trains again.....

LOOK TO FLORIDA for the next action in the 403-b field. Miami-Tampa daily roundtrip service will probably begin next January. The state last month appropriated $900,000 to help Amtrak operate the service, as detailed last issue. The train is expected to leave Miami in the early morning, and leave Tampa in late afternoon. There will be feeder buses at Miami, Winter Haven and Tampa. See also the Urban-Suburban Transit section for information on Florida rail transit plans.....

INTER-STATE COMPACT has been drawn up by the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia and Florida to join together in helping fund a revived New Orleans-Jacksonville GULF WIND. Congress must approve the inter-state compact. A feasibility study is next on the agenda, and rail supporters believe that the train will be running in 1-2 years.....

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THE FEDERAL BUDGET for the next fiscal year is being written, and rail supporters are working toward getting Amtrak its full $788 million funding. NARP is asking rail supporters to keep the pressure on Senators and Congressmen to support the $788 million, the amount that was authorized last year for Amtrak for Fiscal 1983. Washington observers believe that there is a good chance that Amtrak will get the full amount, if the heat is kept on.....

STATE OF CALIFORNIA is having a budget crisis. The state's legislative analyst issued a huge report on Apr 26, which lists options for balancing the state's general fund budget. In it, the state's intercity rail service program comes under attack. Options given range from discontinuing one SAN DIEGAN to save $400,000 to cutting out the entire Amtrak and rail commuter program and saving $22 million. That would decimate the SAN DIEGANS, SAN JOAQUINS and SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA as we know them. California rail supporters are being asked by NARP to begin "deluging" their state legislators with pro-rail passenger mail. The address of legislators is State Capitol, Sacramento CA 95814. NARP suggests calling your newspaper or city hall to obtain the names of your assemblypersons and state senators.....

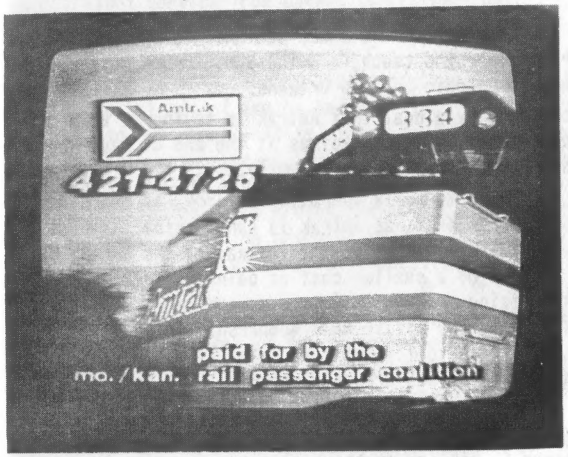
AMTRAK'S ALAN BOYD will remain as chairman of American High-Speed Rail Corporation after he leaves Amtrak, reports the Wall Street Journal.....

HOUSE TRANSPORATION SUBCOMMITTEE, under Congressman Florio has reported out a bill that transfers NE Corricor Improvement Project money to Amtrak.....

SAN FRANCISCO HAS an Amtrak Family Days at its Embarcadero May 14-16.....

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING of April 28 was the first meeting for the Board's three newest members. Their approval was signed by President Reagan the previous day. Evidently no earthshaking business took place at that meeting.....

AMTRAK'S ARROW COMPUTER is now being "fine-tuned", and is having no major problems at present, Amtrak said. An Amtrak spokesman reported that Arrow steering committee members now come out of meetings looking "less depressed." But he added that the heavy summer season coming up will be the real test of the computer.....



TV SPOT COMMERCIALS, a series of 14, were sponsored by the Missouri-Kansas Rail Passenger Coalition in what may be a first. The 30-second ads appeared on KSHB-TV Channel 41 usually within the Independent Network News during the month of March. The taped ads consisted of slides with voice-over and they called attention to Lee's Summit-St. Louis service for $37 roundtrip on weekdays. The adjoining photo, from MOKSRAIL, shows a scene from one of the commercials.....

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NARP DIRECTORS' MEETING was held in Washington Apr 22-24. A new vice-president was elected: John Kirkwood of San Francisco, who succeeds Samuel Stokes. Among individuals addressing the meeting were Larry Gilson of Amtrak and American High-Speed Rail Corporation, and Amtrak men James English, Allan Edelson, Tom Hackney and Gene Eden. Congressman James Florio was presented a Golden Spike award. Amtrak's George Gautney, VP-Computer Services, told why the Arrow computer was put into service abruptly on Nov 1: its maintenance contract expired on Oct 31, due to its age. English and Edelson said that Amtrak will soon sign a mail contract for the EMPIRE BUILDER, which will add significantly to its revenue. They also revealed that Amtrak will soon begin in the Northeast a guaranteed overnight express service with door-to-door delivery, called "Hello Amtrak." Gene Eden was in the Marines for 20 years, and looks the part. He impressed NARP Directors with his earnestness toward getting improvements made in his department (he is VP-Passenger Services). He seeks to eliminate such problems as theft in commissaries (Amtrak loses lots of cutlery, and it's not the passengers who take it, he indicated). A number of new, experimental items will be going onto diner menus, he said, at various points around the system, to break up monotony in ordering for long-distance passengers. He said that the profitability of food service on each Amtrak train is now being costed out, for the first time. He indicated that quite a few of them are profitable in this department. He said personnel are being required to actively solicit passengers' food business on board.....

AMTRAK BULLET TRAINS: A financial consortium will be announced soon that will fund 75% of the proposed Los Angeles-San Diego high-speed line, said Larry Gilson at the NARP Directors' meeting. The other 25% of the $2-billion pricetag will be handled by the Japanese. Gilson told the group that the present SAN DIEGAN service will continue as a feeder line to the high-speed trains at its mid-point in Orange County, where it crosses Interstate 5 (the Bullet Train line is to be built in the median of I-5 primarily). He said that at least 50 roundtrips per day are planned, with a less than one hour trip time. Listeners questioned whether there was sufficient transit in the L.A. and San Diego areas to feed the line (there obviously isn't yet, and L.A. has never been able to get its act together to build up an adequate transit system), since there's no place to park that many cars either. A representative from Northrup Aircraft told the NARP leaders that he believes there is a future in 20,000 to 25,000 miles of high-speed track in the United States.....

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THE SUNSET LIMITED'S lounge car now runs on the EAGLE San Antonio-Chicago, along with the L.A.-Chicago thru sleeper and coach, and the SUNSET runs with diner but no lounge on the leg between San Antonio and New Orleans.....

THE MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE may be saved by a deal that Amtrak is trying to work out with the state of Michigan. The train's contract expires at the end of May. Service to Grand Rapids is reportedly set aside, probably permanently.....

THE SUNSET LIMITED might be increased to daily operation in 1984, at the time of the world's fair in New Orleans, reports NARP, as Amtrak is considering the possibility. Why didn't Amtrak set the SUNSET daily this spring instead of the EMPIRE BUILDER? NARP explains that it was because of a smaller cost of doing so in the EMPIRE BUILDER's case, for fear of antagonizing sources in Congress, and because of strong citizen support for the BUILDER (altho very little NARP membership in that area). There is talk also that if the SUNSET goes daily, at some later time it might join up with the CRESCENT at Houston instead of New Orleans, presumably by extending the CRESCENT to Houston and cutting back the SUNSET to that Texas city.....

GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL may be eliminated in the near future as an Amtrak station. The rail corporation wants to spend $6 million on the beginning of a plan to run the Empire Service trains into Penn Station. Use of Grand Central now costs Amtrak $5.5 million per year. This plan would of course tie together the NE Corridor and the Empire Service route.....

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AMERICAN COAL ENTERPRISES' open-end observation business car "Independence" in rich red paint was seen on the end of what was evidently Corridor train 187, the GEORGE WASHINGTON, going thru Newark NJ on Apr 22. The rest of the train was 5 or 6 Amfleet cars and AEM-7 locomotive.....

SANTA FE RAILWAY has given eviction notices to the three vendors in the Amtrak depot in San Diego due to the coming restoration effort. The vendors are Ajax Rent-A-Car, Mexicoach, and a snack bar. The eviction effort is creating hard feelings, and the vendors are all complaining loudly, as they have been in the station for years. Incidentally, note in the Apr 25 Amtrak timetable that the San Diego Trolley is shown as a genuine connection from the SAN DIEGANS.....

CITY OF LAS VEGAS has awarded a contract to a Michigan-based transportation supplier (unnamed in news releases) to direct its study of high-speed rail passenger service between Las Vegas and Los Angeles.....

THE FLORIDA TRAINS are running with about half Heritage Fleet and half Amfleet II cars now, report train watchers. Amfleet II coaches numbered up to 25040 have been seen on the trains so far.....

THE PIONEER RUNS with an Amcafe every trip now. On Apr 22 the DESERT WIND #35 at Salt Lake had an Amfleet car in lieu of the Superliner diner.....

REVIVING PITTSFIELD-NEW YORK CITY (via Danbury) rail passenger service: The first in a series of meetings takes place May 22 at the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield MA regarding the resumption of this service. The old New Haven RR (later Penn Central) operated a weekend-only service until Apr 30, 1971. Towards the end it consisted of an RDC car to and from a regular train at Danbury rather than a run-thru train out of Grand Central. After cessation of passenger service north of Danbury, freight service ended and the line was abandoned between New Milford and Canaan CT. Miraculously, to this day the track survives, with the exception of two rails at each end of the abandoned route. The first step in reinstating passenger service took place last summer when Connecticut received a CETA grant to clear the line of trees and brush. But resumption of service remains a monumental task. Connecticut DOT runs 7 roundtrips daily between South Norwalk and Danbury. Conrail operates freight service Danbury-New Milford, the state owns the right of way from New Milford to Canaan, and as of Apr 1, 1982 the B&M operates freight service from Canaan to Pittsfield.....

JAPANESE NATIONAL RAILWAY'S Seikan Undersea Tunnel, now under construction, is the subject of an article in Sea Frontiers (Mar-Apr issue), publication of the International Oceanographic Foundation. The 33.6-mile tunnel, which will link the large islands of Honshu and Hokkaido, was begun in 1963 and is expected to be completed this year. It is exclusively for the use of Bullet Trains. The tunnel is an engineering marvel, boring under the treacherous Tsugaru Strait, which now requires a 3- to 4-hour ferry crossing. The Bullet Trains will pass thru the tunnel in 13 minutes. The project is called the largest single-country project in the world, dwarfing the proposed England-France channel tunnel. Total cost of the project will be about $2 billion.....

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RTN READER/NARP MEMBER Harland G. Call writes: "I can't believe that there is no one interested in taking over the former B&O branch line connecting the main line with Fairport OH, which is being dismantled at this time. At least a part of this line could be a profitable operation (Chardon-Painesville OH)--it could prove to be a very popular tourist line, more so than the famous Strasburg line near Lancaster PA, since it would serve the famous Chardon Maple Festival in Ohio with direct connections to Cleveland and Ashtabula, since it has a junction with the N&W at Painesville. The N&W serves both the Ashtabula and Cleveland area and suburbs." Mr. Call offers to furnish any interested readers with more info. Write him at 104 Crescent Parkway, Middletown Turnpike, Red Bank NJ 07701.....

THE TEXAS HOUSE Special Interim Committee on Passenger Rail Service met in Houston Apr 15 to talk with representatives from eight states and seven foreign countries about possible high-speed rail service for the Texas Triangle (Dallas, Houston, San Antonio). The Committee was chaired by Congressman Al Edwards. Also on the agenda was the issue of high-speed rail between San Antonio and Mexico City and a discussion of the proposed L.A.-Las Vegas high-speed line.....

NEW ORLEANS-BATON ROUGE test train that ran on Apr 20 and 21, under ICC orders, since the KCS had refused to allow it, left New Orleans at 9:10am and ran on the KCS to Baton Rouge LA. Consist of the train was F-40 engine 257, coach 4640 and track inspection car 10,000. In the afternoon, the train ran on the ICG Baton Rouge to Hammond LA round trip. On Apr 21 the ICG "river route" was run, from Baton Rouge back to New Orleans. An Amtrak spokesman said later that the ICG "river route" shows the most promise for a passenger route between the two cities. This statement came as a surprise to local rail passenger advocates, as it is known that the "river route" has many yard limits and considerable industrial switching. The KCS route is shorter and is relatively free of congestion--but the railroad is obviously hostile to Amtrak. An official report and cost analysis will be completed by Amtrak in about two weeks after the test run.....

AT NEW ORLEANS on Apr 17, 300 people showed up to ride the CRESCENT, train 20, the 35 miles to Slidell LA to attend a flower and garden show. About 200 were accommodated and 100 left on the platform took buses.....

PICAYUNE, MISSISSIPPI BECOMES a stop for the CRESCENT starting with the late October timetable, 1982. Departure times will be 9:30am northbound and 4:45pm southbound. No time will be added to the train's schedule. The city will complete a passenger facility.....

EPHRATA, WASHINGTON MAY become a stop for the EMPIRE BUILDER in near future.....

AMTRAK TRAIN 168, leaving Washington at 6:30am for Boston, has been named the NEW ENGLAND ZIP because it was scheduled more for mail than for passenger reasons. It carries two mail cars plus Amfleet coaches.....

AMTRAK FAMILY DAYS will be held in San Jose CA on May 23.....

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN had ground-breaking ceremonies recently for a new station jointly funded by Amtrak and the state. Opening will be spring, 1983.....

AMTRAK COMMUTER SERVICES CORPORATION has dropped the name "Amtrak".....

AMTRAK PASSENGER COMPLAINTS dropped 50% in fiscal year 1981, Amtrak said.....

News in this issue is updated thru May 7, 1982.

CARS & CONSISTS

Amtrak car 2312 "Ft. Lauderdale", one of many passenger cars in storage at New Orleans. Photographed Apr 11 by Jack Ferry.

*CAPITOL LIMITED, train 441, McKeesport PA Apr 29: engine 376; cars 1138 & 1216 baggage, sleeper 2893, coaches 4715, 4705, Amfleet II cafe-lounge 28002.

*NIGHT OWL, train 66, New Haven Apr 18: engine 934 (AEM-7, off at New Haven), 201 & 208 (F40s, New Haven-Boston); cars 1212, 1170, 21854, 21004, 20047, 21848, 21843, 2980 "Pine Creek".

*East Shore Ramble excursion train Easton MD-Clayton DE Apr 18: engine MD&DE 23 (Alco RS-1); cars RRP 6601 coach (ex-B&M 4808), heavywt parlor-lounge diner "Defender", observation car "Edward G. Hooper".

*UP Old-Timers' Special, eastbound, Salt Lake City Apr 21, 11pm: engines 9002, 9003, 9004, 9001 (GP40X's); cars 301, 304, 1610 "Sun Skies", 5472, 5486, 5484, 5483, 5468, 6203, 5716, 4808, 4000, 5000, 6206, 5473, 5475, dome coach 7006, 5480, 5474, 5482, 1609 "Sun Ridge" with drumhead.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Newton KS Apr 2: engines 235, 294; cars 1143, 1254 baggage; Hi-level 39928, Superliner 31042, Hi-level 39956, Superliners 34085 lounge, 38034 diner, sleepers 32036 & 32042.

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 6, Chicago Apr 24: engines 330, 310, 358; cars 1255, 1151, Hi-level 39931, Superliners 32037, 32044, 38014, 33012, 31015, 34047, 34046, 32051.

*LAKE CITIES, train 352, Chicago Apr 24: engine 364; cars 20228, 21154, 21238. Train 353, Kalamazoo Apr 24: engine 334; cars 20231, 21209, 21167, 21112.

*TWILIGHT LIMITED, train 355, Kalamazoo Apr 24: engine 304; cars 20042, 21234, 21214.

Thirty Amtrak cars are in storage at Michigan City IN, including: 4893, 4483, 3360 "Chessie Club", 4491, 8096, 2201, 2239, 2150, 9990, and one ex-GN Great Dome.

FRANCE'S HIGH-SPEED TRAINS

(continued from page 6)

before the high-speed line required four hours, can now be covered in 2:40 hours at maximum speeds of 165mph. In the fall of 1983, when work on the remaining northern section will be completed, the trip will be reduced even further: to 2 hours exactly.

At present, TGV trains depart Paris and Lyon every hour. More frequent departures are planned at a later date.

No standees are accepted on TGV trains. Seat reservations are compulsory, and to that effect, automatic reservation machines have been installed on station platforms to make reservations possible up to 5 minutes before train departure.

Interior seating is designed somewhat like that of an airplane with four people abreast in second class and three in first class.

There is no formal dining car on board, but first-class passengers can obtain hot meals at their seats, while second-class passengers may find meals at a bar located in the middle of the train. The bar also sells cigarettes, newspapers and magazines.

With TGV trains, French National Railroads did not aim to create a luxury service intended for business travelers or first-class passengers only, but it tried to provide frequent high-speed service for everyone.

The fare is that of conventional trains in first class as well as in second class. Only during peak hours is a surcharge levied. To use the airline terminology, the TGV is not "a high contribution train." In 1982, the 265-mile trip to Lyon costs $57 in first class and $38 in second class, which comes to about 21.5¢ per mile in first class and 14.3¢ per mile in second class. It is the first time in transportation history that from the outset advanced technology is made available to all consumers at current price levels.

Based upon studies conducted before construction of the new high-speed line, French National Railroads anticipates that passenger traffic between Paris and Lyon, presently 15 million people a year, will reach 20 million by 1985. In addition, it is expected that there will be a shift from private automobiles and airplanes to the railroads: 3 million a year from autos and 1.5 million a year from airplanes by 1985.

The first results obtained after only a few months of operation are extremely encouraging:

--Traffic has grown from 77,400 passengers in the first week of operation to over 115,000 a week today.

--The one-millionth passenger was carried on Nov 21, 1981, less than two months after the opening of the line.

--French National Railroads carries about 15,000 passengers daily and over 20,000 on Fridays by TGV.

--32% of all passengers use first class.

--Everyday there are about 5000-7000 new passengers compared to the year before. About 1000 of these passengers are former air travelers.

--The occupancy ratio is 68% on the new line. Since a 65% ratio was the objective after one year of operation, this means that the new high-speed line has well exceeded all expectations.

--On-time performance is 97.9%.

Last February 1982, at the request of President Mitterand, the French National Railroads submitted to its Board of Directors a proposal for the construction of a second high-speed line, this one to serve Brittany and the southwest of France. It is to be known as the "TGV Atlantique." This project will be reviewed by the government and could become a reality as early as 1988.

The "TGV Atlantique" would consist of a 219-mile dedicated passenger high-speed line which would connect Paris to existing tracks south of Tours and west of Le Mans.

When completed, TGV trains will link Paris to Tours in one hour (instead of two hours), Paris to Nantes in two hours (instead of 3:17 hours), Paris to Bordeaux in 3 hours (instead of 4 hours), and Paris to Brittany in 4 hours (instead of 5:39 hours).

Since the area the "TGV Atlantique" would serve is not as rugged as that of the Paris to Lyon high-speed line, gradients would not have to be as steep, and therefore each TGV train will haul two extra cars, increasing the number of available seats from 386 to 484.

The cost is estimated to be slightly less than that of the Paris-Lyon line. It would create about 10,000 new jobs and further reduce energy consumption on the national level. But, while the Paris-Lyon line was entirely financed by French National Railroads, the "TGV Atlantique" is expected to be paid for by public and private funds.

It thus appears that the trust France has always placed in its rail system has proven to be well-deserved. Once again, its technology is ahead of its time and with its TGV train it sets the pace for 21st Century rail travel with tremendous economic benefits to the Nation and its people.

RIDING EL COSTENO
by Walt Stringer

It has been over three years since I travelled to interior Mexico, and so it was with feelings of both eagerness and some apprehension that I stood at the madhouse known as the S.B.C. Mexicali depot waiting to board Rapido #4, the EL COSTENO.

The train ride, part of a weekend getaway to the Gulf of California village of Puerto Penasco, was made by our group of 14 in a private lounge car based in Mexicali. San Diegl's very active local railfan group-museum, PSRMA, travels to Mexico, Central America and South America frequently, and one of their most popular runs is the Puerto Penasco trip. They go for both one-day and weekend jaunts, and the weekender best suited my desire for an Eastertime break, as well as being a more comprehensive trip.

It began at 4am on Saturday, Apr 3 at Amtrak's San Diego depot, and the Greyhound charter dropped us at the Calexico Border at 7am, after a brief look at SP's Calexico yard and trackage (no depot anymore). Taxis took us into Mexico (the SP-SBC interchange is a gate right smack in the middle of the auto customs area), and the Ferrocarril Sonora Baja California station, a large complex of red brick buildings (a new passenger waiting room-ticket office is under active construction), is about 10 minutes to the south.

Our first surprise of the trip was the throng at the station; along with the usual complement of Mexican citizens, there were some 300 U.S. college students bound for Mazatlan and Easter week on the beach. The normal schedules on this line have been adjusted due to major trackwork north of Benjamin Hill, resulting in the following new (and, they say, temporary) schedules:

Train 1, EL MEXICALI, secondary train, arrive 1100. Train 2, ditto, depart 2045. Train 3, EL COSTENO, Rapido, arrive 2020. Train 4, ditto, depart 0800.

The passenger tracks had plenty of interesting cars, and there was some freight activity visible, including a TOFC Area and a GP-9 switching. Passenger cars stored at the depot were: SBC office car 190 "Sonora", coach 1257 "Maria Elena", stainless diner (or slpr-lounge) "El Cachinilla", private car (round-end obs) "Los Angeles Club" (ex-NP, ex "Hulham"), SBC baggage 1542, dormitorio SCD 465 "Rio Mocorito", 454 "Aries", SBC Japanese coaches 5148, 5153, and baggage 5511.

Our train was a monster, lined up from pilot to markers as follows: SBC hi-nose GP40 engine 2106 (orange & green), Primera coach 5118 (ex-MP, runs to Benjamin Hill for locals), Japanese cars (lettered both SBC and FCP) 5149, 5152, 5150, 5147, 1240, 1242, 1260, 5146, 5141, comedor SCD 3663 "Sabinas" (ex-NYC), dormitorios SCD 639 "Medrid", 256 "Rio San Pedro" (ex-MP "Eagle Valley"), 500 "Grecia", 573 "El Salvador", 245 "Cassiopeia", 580 "Luxemburgo", and private car 1531 "Mexicali Rose" (ex-UP lounge). We identified most all the sleepers as ex-NYC, both stainless and smoothsides. Of course, they are all painted the ubiquitous Mexican green and have been re-lettered many times, making it a fun task to find a car's origin--many times the electrical cabinet holds the answer. Tot al consist of the train was one GP40 and 18 passenger cars--possibly the most outrageous case of underpowering I have ever seen. It reminded me of a 1974 ride on the INTER-AMERICAN, hours late in Texas on the Santa Fe behind two ailing E units, when I said to the crew that we sure were late. The Santa Fe conductor, in his finest Texas twang, said that it wasn't hard when you only had one dawg pulling the sled. With this in mind, we clambered aboard our haven at the rear of the train, and a fully-packed EL COSTENO eased out right on the dot of 8:00.

The ride to Puerto Penasco is scheduled for about 3 1/2 hours, and includes the industrial south side of Mexicali, the farmlands and energy development of northern Sonora, and finally the forbidding Altir desert, full of scrub, sand dunes, flying dust and mirages. There is one stop at Cohuala (9:20 to 9:25 on our trip), and we passed a huge work gang laying concrete ties and welded rail in the Altir on a lengthy 10mph slow order. The entire line has no signals and is run strictly on clearance cards and train order meets.

We met train #1 at 10am with a GP40 and eight cars--baggage, 3 heavyweight coaches, two primera coaches, and two Hawkker-Siddley coaches. About 11am, in the middle of the infernal desert, we passed a miniature Washington monument with four crosses at its base--reportedly where four railroad surveyors perished after they were separated from their party and their water ran out.

The track ranged from very good to fair, getting worse as we went south (no doubt the summer desert heat at work over the years). Timekeeping was even worse, as our lone EMD 3000hp dawg labored mightily to haul the train.

Walking thru the train, we found the temperature control in all cars working, the diner fairly busy (three items on the breakfast menu), and the MoPac coach up front in a horrible state of disrepair, with the unofficial snack bar set up at one end. The college students had several coaches and dormitorios to themselves and these cars quickly began to resemble Animal House--the spirit of John Belushi must have been with them. Our tour group had an enjoyable ride with the rear door open, the scenery was quite pretty in its own way, and arrival in Penasco was at 12:45.

Puerto Penasco is a growing resort town, with several paved streets and a brand new stoplight. There are several nice beaches and superb seashell collecting is enjoyed. The village is the home of a large shrimp boat fleet, and most visitors take a cooler down to transport these jumbos back to the States with them. Local historians point out that President Roosevelt was brought here after the Pearl Harbor attack; apparently he was in California at the time and met several Allied leaders in a small waterfront villa (now nearly destroyed) in Penasco.

The train station is a fair-sized brick building containing a small waiting room, ticket office (with mucho paper ticket stock), and operator's office. The op's office is especially useful for predicting the Sunday northbound arrival of train 3. Early in the morning he gets a report from Guaymas, and then later a report comes from Benjamin Hill, where the train from Guadalajara splits to become a Nogales section and a Mexicali section.

Train 3 is chronically late, and usually leaves in mid- to late afternoon. Our No. 3 arrived at 3:25 with hi-nose GP40 2104, coach 5118, seven Japanese coaches, comedor "El Seri" (ex-UP) SCD 1372, dormitorios SCD 544 "Etiopa", 254 "Rio Molola" (ex-T&P "Eagle Call"), 650 "Napoles", 539 "Libano", and "Mexicali Rose." Again, most sleepers appeared to be ex-NYC.

The train was backed into the siding to get our car, then pulled ahead and backed into the depot. These moves illustrated the lack of safety practices in Mexico: the train was backed with no crewman at the rear to look out, and was moved with passengers visibly getting on and off the steps.

Once more the train was packed, but only 14 cars trailed the GP40 this time. We left at 4:00, made a faster run up the line, left Cohuala at 6:45, and went around the wye at Mexicali and backed in at 7:55pm. This time a crewman manned the backup hose, and dumped the air to stop us just short of the bumper post. We did pass one large freight on the way up, and the second class train 2 was in the station at Mexicali, with the same makeup of heavyweights, primeras and Hawkkers as No. 1 had on Saturday.

Train 2 was inhabited by hundreds of Mexican families with assorted pets and poultry--truly the people's train. Another mob scene presented itself outside the depot as a gaggle of taxi drivers solicited for fares. After a hair-raising ride to the fence and a long wait at Immigration, we were back in Estados Unidos and back on the Hound to San Diego. It was a long and very pleasant weekend, and the railroading was a good part of the fun.

WRECK OF THE OLD 97

Newly-released booklet documenting the history of this famous tragedy on the Southern Railway in 1903.

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MOVING?
Be sure to notify RTN of your new address as soon as possible. Don't rely on the Postal Service to forward your mail!

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Francorail, the French rolling stock manufacturing group, has decided to expand still further... Francorail's most ambitious proposal is to penetrate the U.S. market for passenger coaches by teaming up with an American builder to compete with Budd, the sole surviving U.S. passenger coach manufacturer, which is owned by Thyssen of West Germany. Amrail is the name Francorail has chosen to promote its American activities. Bombardier of Canada has already taken steps to establish itself in Vermont, and Japanese manufacturers are scouting for a similar opportunity."

--Railway Gazette International, April.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"AC T3/82nsit and the Municipal Railway wil be important beneficiaries of SB 1355 and the bill is vital to the continuance of the Southern Pacific/CalTrans Peninsula rail commuter service."

--From San Francisco Chronicle editorial, Mar 31.

(One of those beneficiaries isn't listed in our transit directory.)

RAIL FANTRIPS

May 15: The Tulip Train, Chicago-Holland MI, RT. To Tulip Time Festival; run by 20th C. RR Club, 2nd year (900 psgrs in 1981). $47 ($43 under 12) incl box dinner. Richard Brooks, 8100 S. Rhodes, Chicago IL 60619; 846-3600 info hotline 24 hours.

Jun 5: Galesburg Zephyr, Chicago-Galesburg IL, RT; to 7th annual Railroad Days. Tour BN yards; Amtrak car display; dedication of Galesburg RR Museum; antique car display; free juice & pastry. Amfleet train. Same address & phone as above. $47

Jun 5: Day at the Valley RR; Metropark NJ (Newark & NYC) to Essex CT, ride Valley RR steam train, 1-hr river cruise on 250-psgr excursion boat. $43 ($25 under 12). Jersey Central RHS c/o H.R. Hill, Box 127, Bernardsville NJ 07924.

Jun 18-20: NY-Albany-Boston-NY luxury triangle with office car LV353. Limit 20. $260, incl all meals, beverages enroute (hotels extra). DL Ross, 300 Winston Dr, #2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010; 201-886-1359; see Express Ads below.

Jun 26 or 27: UP steam train with #3985 Salt Lake-Provo RT ea day. $22.50 incl box lunch. Steam Show 1982, Box 20443, Salt Lake City UT 84120 (payable to NRHS). Space from L.A. 6/25 avail from: Let's Travel Tours, 3780 Elizabeth, Riverside CA.

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK EURAIL PASS, 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS - tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

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NARP REGION 9 MEMBERS! Notice is given of Proposal to organize members into unincorporated membership assoc'n. Alfred Ehm, 170 Carousel, San Antonio TX 78227.

DELAWARE VALLEY RAILS, the complete railroad and rail transit guide to the Philadelphia region. $11.50 (Pennsylvanians, add 69¢ tax). $12.50 outside U.S. John R. Pawson, Box 411, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

WANTED: Original color slides of Amtrak trains in scenic locations. $5.00 paid for each slide retained. Unwanted slides returned. Michael Koch, 3813 Forest Grove, Annandale VA 22003.

TWO PULLMAN CLASSICS together for the first time! Open-platform business car LV 353 and 5 dbr-8 sec sleeper "Clover Colony" join for two luxury weekend private car trips, each starting and ending in New York: July 2-5, "Cardinal" to Chicago, "Broadway" returning, from $745; July 9-11, "Montrealer" to Montreal, "Cavalier" to Toronto, "Maple Leaf" returning, from $715. Includes all accommodations, plus meals and beverages prepared aboard and elegantly served en route by Pullman veterans. Space limited to 20 guests per trip. Info, reservations from D.L. Ross, 300 Winston Dr, Apt. 2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010. (201) 886-1359.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads: only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

JAN 1982 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE/(DECREASE) OVER 1981

METROLINERS	87,780	(18.8)
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	499,091	20.4
PHIL-NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	17,698	(22.4)
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	169,401	(1.1)
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	71,933	(4.5)
NEW YORK-HARRISBURG	26,406	5.4
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	872,309	6.7
NEW YORK-NIAGARA FALLS	67,900	15.1
CHICAGO-ST.LOUIS	23,330	.9
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	11,572	(48.4)
CHICAGO-DETROIT/TOLEDO	35,288	(1.2)
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	18,737	44.3
CHICAGO-QUINCY	6,351	(.1)
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	92,855	10.4
SEATTLE-EUGENE	3,904	(33.2)
VANCOUVER-SEATTLE	0	(100.0)
WASHINGTON-CINCINNATI	0	(100.0)
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	19,861	(13.4)
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	12,598	20.6
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	4,918	(1.6)
CHICAGO-PORT HURON	8,651	4.7
CHICAGO-DUBUQUE	0	(100.0)
CHICAGO-DULUTH	2,869	(1.8)
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	18,606	(.5)
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	4,253	(11.7)
CHICAGO-PEORIA	0	(100.0)
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	5,913	(32.6)
PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH	8,546	53.7
PORTLAND-EUGENE	0	(100.0)
CHICAGO-MINNEAPOLIS	0	(100.0)
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	6,095	.0
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	352,247	(3.5)
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	12,345	(11.2)
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	50,761	(6.9)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	19,379	(6.9)
CHICAGO-CINCINNATI-WASHINGTON	3,354	(65.8)
CHICAGO-SEATTLE	29,769	52.7
CHICAGO-SAN FRANCISCO	28,798	(7.7)
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	19,700	(15.1)
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	16,910	7.2
CHICAGO-TEXAS	5,673	(51.4)
LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS	5,504	(16.8)
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	29,142	(24.2)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	24,530	(7.8)
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	7,965	41.2
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	11,426	(1.5)
SEATTLE-SALT LAKE CTY/CHI	15,154	13.3
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	18,340	1.0
LOS ANGELES/OGDEN-CHI	9,565	(8.1)
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	308,315	(6.9)
SPECIAL TRAINS	4,792	(4.8)
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,537,663	1.3

Here are Amtrak's ridership figures for the month of Jan 1982, just released. For the Nov and Dec 1981 data, see issue no. 242.

Overall, ridership was up in January--1.3% higher than in Jan 1981. This increase was due primarily to improved Northeast Corridor patronage. While both short distance and long distance business was off in January, NE Corridor business was up 6.7%--a favorable sign after many recent months of lagging Corridor business. Corridor business was up in two categories: conventional trains and on the NY-Harrisburg segment.

Elsewhere in the Amtrak system, depressed ridership was due in large part to the routes discontinued last October. These can be identified by the zeroes in the ridership column. There were a few bright spots in the system: the Chicago-Seattle EMPIRE BUILDER showed a 52.7% increase; Boston-Newport News was up 41.2%, Chicago-Carbondale was up 44.3%, and Philadelphia-Pittsburgh climbed 53.7%.

Note that the Chicago-Cincinnati-Washington CARDINAL was reinstated in January and was not running for the full month. This fact, along with startup uncertainties must have caused the low ridership shown for January. Later reports have been that patronage has been quite favorable.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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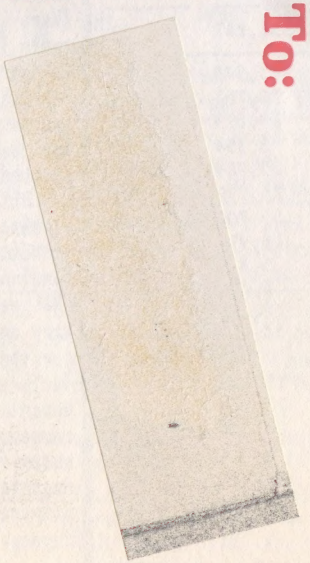

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